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A

SERMON

PREACHT AT

Shaftsbury,

AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

GUYDO

By Divine Providence

Lord Biſhop of BRISTOL.

By *HAMNET WARD*, Doctor of Phyſick, Vicar of *Stourminſter-Newton-Caſtle*, in the County of *Dorſet*, and one of the Prebendaries of the Cathedral Church at *Wells*.

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Rev. Reverend Father in GOD,

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To the Right Reverend Father in God, and my ever honoured Lord, *GUY DO*, by Divine Providence Lord Biſhop of *Briſtol*, &c.

Right Reverend Father in God,
and my ever honoured Lord:

THOUGH I am not of the opinion with that Jeſuit who profeſs'd, That if his Superior ſhould command him to ſet out to Sea in a Tempeſt, in a leaky Veſſel, without Maſts, without Sails, without Rudder, without Anchor, without Pilot, he would moſt readily obey: Yet I have ever had ſuch an awful reverence to the Commands of ſuch, in all things lawful, that I look upon it as my duty rather to prevent than to diſpute the execution of them. Nor do I think it would become any man buſily to enquire into the reaſons and grounds of ſuch Injunctions; but rather without any nice diſcuſſion or examination, cheerfully to do what he is bid. For to be curious in ſifting the reaſons of the Commands of our Governours; to heſitate and

ſtick at every thing that is enjoin'd; to think the worſe of the Charge, becauſe we cannot ſound the cauſe or depth of it, * Delicata ſatis, immo nimis moleſta eſt hujuſcemodi obedientia, *Such a kind of Obedience is too nice and delicate, nay 'tis too troubleſome and offenſive, not to be ſuffered or endured. My Lord! What I here profeſs, I practiſe: Your Lordſhip commanded this Sermon to be made publick; and it is done, without enquiring into the reaſons why. My Credit is ſecur'd by my Obedience; your Lordſhip's Approbation being ſufficient to countenance it when it was Preacht, and your Patronage to protect it now it is Printed. Which if your Lordſhip ſhall vouchſafe to do, it will both encourage me in my future Labours, and oblige me more and more to profeſs my ſelf, as I am already for ever bound to be,*

* *Bern.* in Tractat. de præcepto & diſpenſatione.

Your Lordſhips moſt humble

and obedient Servant,

HAMNET WARD.

A VISITATION SERMON.

EPHES. III. Ver. 8.

Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.

THAT *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son Jeſus Chriſt, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; is a Myſtery ſo deep, that the Angels themſelves, though they did παρακύψαι, ſtoop to pry into it, could not fathom. But that the Gentiles, *who knew not God*, that *were ſtrangers and aliens to the Commonwealth of Iſrael*, ſhould be likewiſe *made fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God*; This was that which the Arch-Angels themſelves, the ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐξουσίαι, the *Principalities and Powers in Heavenly*

1 Pet. 1.12.

Epheſ. 3.10.

Heavenly places could not of themſelves reach to underſtand.

Our Apoſtle then being to unriddle this great Secret of Mans Salvation, to his Diſciples the *Epheſians*, could bethink himſelf of no better expedient than what he had made uſe of in all his Epiſtles to the reſt of the Churches, to aſſure them That he was ſent from God, That he came not in his own Name, but in the Name of God; which he doth both in the front of this Epiſtle, and in the words of my Text, but with an humble acknowledgment of his own unworthineſs, and an high admiration of Gods Goodneſs towards him, in making him the Herald of ſo great a Mercy, which had lain
Col. 1. 26. ſo long *hid from ages and generations: To me* (ſaith he) *who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.*

In which words we have theſe particulars chiefly obſervable.

Firſt, The low reckoning which S. *Paul* here makes of himſelf, *To me who am leſs than the leaſt.*

Secondly, The Declaration of his Commiſſion.

miſſion, and from whom he received it; *To me, who am leſs than the leaſt, is this grace given, that I may preach.*

Thirdly, The Perſons amongſt whom he was chiefly to exerciſe this Commiſſion, the Gentiles, *that I may preach among the Gentiles.*

And laſtly, The ſubſtance or burden of his Commiſſion, what he was to preach, *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.*

To me who am leſs than the leaſt, &c. ἐμοὶ, *even to me*; here is an *emphaſis* upon the word, as we may gather from the Verſes going before the Text; *Whereof I was made a Miniſter, according to the Grace of God given to me, by the effectual working of his power: To me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints.* But leſt this ſhould be too little to ſet out his unworthineſs for ſo great an Employment; by an elegant ὀνοματοποιία he coins a word on purpoſe, which he thinks will fit no body ſo well as himſelf, ἐμοὶ τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ, *to me who am leſs than the leaſt*; he forms a degree of compariſon beyond the *ſuperlative*; Ἐλάχιστος was not enough, but ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων, *leſs than the leaſt of all.* Some read it, ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων Ἀποστόλων, *leſs*

leſs than the leaſt of all the Apoſtles. Others, πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints.* But the bare words, as we read them, ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων, *leſs than the leaſt of all*, will ſurely ſerve beſt to our Apoſtl's purpoſe, who intends nothing elſe but to make himſelf appear as vile as he can, and utterly unworthy in himſelf for the diſpenſation of ſo great a Myſtery. *To me who am leſs than the leaſt*, not only of all the Apoſtles, not only of all Saints, but of all, and of any thing that is good, *is this Grace given.*

But how comes it to paſs that S. *Paul* lays himſelf here ſo low? If we look upon him in ſome other of his Epiſtles, we ſhall find him altogether as high: In 2 *Cor.* 12. 11, he tells us, That he was *not behind* τῶν ὑπερλίαν Ἀποστόλων, *the very chiefeſt of the Apoſtles.* Nay, in 1 *Cor.* 15. 10, he is not afraid to tell you, *That he laboured* περισσότερον, *more abundantly than they all*; and yet here he is ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων, *leſs than the leaſt of all:* How doth this agree? This ſeeming-contradiction the Bleſſed Saint himſelf ſufficiently clears in 2 *Cor.* 12. 11, he calls himſelf a fool for thus glorying; but withal he tells the *Corinthians*, that they had compell'd him;

him; out of a holy jealouſie over his Diſciples (the *Corinthians*) who ſeemed to make more account of their falſe Teachers, the *Gnoſtick* Hereticks, thoſe primitive Conventiclers, than of him; he is forc't to magnifie his Apoſtleſhip, and the ſucceſs of his Labours throughout the Churches, the more to win them to a reverend eſteem of his Doctrine. That he had no end to exalt himſelf, appears plainly by the cloſe of all thoſe places where he ſeems to trumpet his own praiſe, as in 2 *Cor.* 12. 11, *I came not behind* (ſaith he) *the chiefeſt Apoſtles*, ἀλλὰ οὐδέν εἰμι, *yet I am nothing.* And in 1 *Cor.* 15. 10, *I have wrought more abundantly than they all* (ſaith he) οὐκ ἐγὼ δέ, *yet not I, but the Grace of God that was with me.*

Here then we may take out a leſſon of Humility; Whatſoever Endowments either of Grace or Nature God hath beſtowed upon us, not to make them a ſtep to ſet our ſelves higher in our conceits; but rather a means to humble us, and to ſee our own unworthineſs, *Quis nobis relinquitur gloriandi locus recordantibus omnia a Deo eſſe?* ſaith St. *Hilary*: *How can we boaſt our ſelves*

of any thing we have, whilst we remember that all we have comes from God? If this great Vessel of Election St. *Paul*, who was τοσοῦτος, καὶ τηλικοῦτος, as *Theophylact* speaks of him; such a Saint, and so great a Saint, doth yet acknowledg himself *less than the least of all Saints*; how lowly should we conceive of our selves, who have not attained to the least measure of his stature in Christ? Our great Lord Jesus must have all his Servants like himself; *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Mat. 11. 29. The lower we esteem our selves, the fitter he thinks us for his service: He loves not to employ such as stand peremptorily upon their own Parts and Abilities; that think themselves fit to share with him in his Glory. He delights to fill those Vessels that are most sensible of their own emptiness: *The hungry he filleth with his good things, but the rich he sends empty away*. If we desire then to have our services acceptable to Christ, we must take the Apostle's Advice which he gives us, *Rom.* 12. 3. μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν· ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, not to think of our selves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly; and let us esteem our selves as he does himself

Luke 1. 53.

ſelf here in the Text, *leſs than the leaſt.*

Thus much concerning the firſt particular obſerved in the words, The low reckoning and eſteem that St. *Paul* had of himſelf. I haſten now to the ſecond, *i. e.* The Declaration of his Commiſſion, and from whence he received it, *To me who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach*, &c. Our Apoſtle had but ſmall hopes of working any good in the hearts of the Gentiles, unleſs he could firſt ſettle them in this aſſurance, That he was ſent from God; and therefore it is that he ſo often puts them in mind of it, not only in this, but in the reſt of his Epiſtles. And herein he follows the example of Chriſt himſelf, who, that he might add the greater weight to his Doctrine, often declares his Commiſſion which he had received from God his Father. Gods Word never worketh ſo effectually, as when it is delivered by thoſe who have received Authority from God. The Grapes are but wild which ſpring from the Labours of thoſe men which preſume to dig in Gods Vinyard without being hired; and the ſeed which they ſow, like that of the Enemy in the Goſpel, turns all to Tares. He

Joh. 5. 43.

Mat. 13. 25.

that comes to work in Gods Harveſt without Gods ſending him, is juſt as welcome as he that comes to feaſt with him, not having on his Wedding-garment. God will have his Church built by his own Work-men; and his Meſſages proclaim'd by his own Heralds. He needs no hot-zeal'd *Uzzahs* to ſupport
2 Sam. 6. 7. his Ark; never loves he to employ ſuch over-haſty Meſſengers as would run on his Errand before they be ſpoken to. The Milk
1 Pet. 2. 2. of Gods Word is ἄδολον, *ſincere*; and muſt be put into Veſſels of Gods own caſting, or elſe it may be corrupted, and turn ſowr, and prove a *ſavour of death unto death*, inſtead of being a *ſavour of life unto life*. Saint *Paul* was one of thoſe choſen Veſſels, he had a Miſſion; and he tells you from whence, *from the Grace of God*; and ſo ought every man to have, before he takes upon him the Authority to preach Gods Word. 'Tis not the excellency of Parts, nor the depth of Learning, that can qualifie any man ſufficiently for this Sacred Function, without the ordinary Call and Commiſſion ſetled in the Church by Chriſt. Every *Iſraelite* or *Levite* that was able to offer Sacrifice, was not therefore admitted to that Office; no, none took that honour

nour to themſelves, but ſuch as were called of God, as was *Aaron*. Nor can any now under the Goſpel, who hath never ſo rich a Furniture of Gifts and Graces, be a right Miniſter of Chriſt, where there is not a right Patent or Commiſſion given in his Name by due Ordination. As it is no leſs than Treaſon for the ableſt States-man to take upon himſelf the Office of an Envoy or Embaſſador, without a Commiſſion from the Prince whoſe ſubject he is; ſo 'tis an unſufferable affront offered to the Majeſty of Chriſt, for any man (be he otherwiſe never ſo able) to pretend the executing any Office in his Name without his Licenſe and Authority. St. *Paul* was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, a learned Doctor of the Law, a man had in reputation among all the people: nay, he had a far greater Inſtructer than *Gamaliel*, even God himſelf. He tells you in *Gal.* 1. 12, that he was θεοδίδακτος; God was his School-Maſter, and the third Heaven was his School. And yet this great Secretary of God, if I may ſo call him, is ſent (in the *9th* Chapter of the *Acts*) to *Ananias* to be ordained, that he may lay his hands on him, and ſo fit him for the Miniſtry of the Goſpel. Nay, more than this, in the *13th* of the

Acts 5. 34.

the *Acts*, God doth, as it were, give him Inſtitution and Induction by the hands of certain Prophets and Teachers, into the Church of the *Gentiles*.

And thus hath God thought fit in all Ages of the Church, to qualifie thoſe whom he makes choice of for his Miniſters: Firſt, He gives them an inward Call, furniſhing them with the Graces and Aſſiſtance of his Spirit, and then he ſets the Seal of the Church upon them, by laying on the hands of his Apoſtles, his Biſhops, unto whom only he hath committed this Power; Apoſtles, I ſay, or Biſhops, call them which you pleaſe, for they are *ſynonomous*, they are the ſame, whatever diſtinctions thoſe *Heſterni*, as *Tertullian* calls *Praxeas*, thoſe men of yeſterday, have found to the contrary, τοὺς νῦν καλουμένους ἐπισκόπους ἀπόμαζον ἀποστόλους, ſaith *Theodoret*, Thoſe whom we now call *Biſhops* were firſt called *Apoſtles*; and to theſe Apoſtles or Biſhops properly and ſolely belongs the Power of Ordination. St. *Hierom*, who ſometimes ſeems to lay Biſhops as low as he could, yet never adventured to take this from them, *Quid facit Epiſcopus, quod non facit Presbyter, excepta Ordinatione?* VVhat can a Biſhop do that a Prieſt cannot (ſaith he), excepting only Ordi-

1 Tim. 4. 14

Biſhop *Taylor* in his Conſecration Sermon at *Dublin*.

Ordination, that he leaves ſtill annext only to *Epiſcopacy*.

And this Power the Apoſtles, thoſe firſt Biſhops, received from Chriſt, that πρωτοστάτους, as *Ignatius* ſtiles him; that *Authenticus Dei Patris Pontifex*, as *Tertullian* calls him; The *great Biſhop of our ſouls*, as the Apoſtle calls him: Their Charter is recorded in *Joh.* 20. 21, *Sicut miſit me Pater*, *As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you.*

Ignat. Epiſt. ad *Magneſ.*

Tertul. 4. lib. contra *Marcion.*

And as they only received this Power from Chriſt, ſo they only exerciſed it, as it is evident by the planting of the Church at *Samaria*, upon their converſion by *Philip*, where there wanted a Miniſtry; St. *Peter* and St. *John* were ſent from *Jeruſalem* to do that which *Philip*, though a *Preſbyter*, and one of the Seventy, could not do: Theſe two Biſhops being arrived, by Prayer and ſolemn Impoſition of hands, conferred on them the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 8. 14, 15, 17. And this Power which they thus received from Chriſt, they left to their Succeſſors the Biſhops, or Apoſtles, whom they choſe, with a *Sicut nos miſit Chriſtus*, *As Chriſt hath ſent us, ſo ſend we you. For this cauſe left I thee in Creet* (ſaith Saint *Paul* to *Titus*, whom he

he ordained Biſhop, if not Arch-Biſhop there) *that thou ſhouldſt ordain Elders in every City.* For this left he *Timothy* at *Epheſus*, εἰς χειροθεσίαν, for the laying on of his hands. For this cauſe left they *Clemens* at *Rome*, *Mark* at *Alexandria*, *Ignatius* at *Antioch*, *Epaphroditus* at *Philippi*, *Polycarp* at *Smyrna*: All which (if there be any faith in Chriſtians that gave their lives for a Teſtimony to the Faith; and, unleſs we take all the Church-Hiſtories for ſo many *Romances*) were Biſhops fixt in their ſeveral Dioceſes, executing this Power of Ordination, as properly belonging to them, *Ad huc viventibus, & approbantibus Apoſtolis*, The Apoſtles themſelves, many of them, being yet alive to ſee this done; nay, they themſelves doing it, and approving it. And bleſſed be God that we can yet ſay as *Irenæus* did long ago, *Habemus annumerare eos qui ab Apoſtolis inſtituti ſunt Epiſcopi, & ſucceſſores eorum uſq; ad nos*, That notwithſtanding all oppoſition, God hath preſerved a Succeſſion of Biſhops from the Apoſtles days unto ours, to ordain ſuch as he picks out to ſerve at his Altar.

Ti. 1. 5.

1 Tim. 5. 22.

Irenæus lib. 3 contra *Valent.* cap. 3

John 3. 9.

VVhat ſhall we ſay then of thoſe *Diotrephes's* of our times, that fain would have ſome præ-

eminence

eminence in the Church, but would break open the dores to come in, and ſo commit *Burglary* (for it is no better) in the Houſe of God: That with a few ſhreads of ſecond-hand-Learning, and a perſwaſion from the Devil of their own ſufficiency, think this enough to ſet up their ſhops in their Synagogues, and there to vent their falſe VVares, and foiſted Forgeries, to their miſguided Sectaries.

Others there are, who deſerve Chriſts whip as well as the former; who though they break not open the dores of the Church, yet they cannot be contented to go in at the old Dores, they muſt make new ones of their own, or they'l not come there; ſuch as are ſatisfied of the neceſſity of this outward Call, but think not a *Timothy*, a *Titus* (no, nor St. *Paul* neither, doubtleſs, if he were living) ſufficient to ordain them; but they muſt rather chuſe to receive a Commiſſion from a *Cabal* or *Claſſis* of *Presbyters*, a pack of *Fanaticks*, a Conventicle of *Schiſmaticks* (for ſo I may juſtly call all ſuch as thus ſeparate themſelves from this Ancient Order of the Church), rather than from thoſe whom God hath ſet apart for this Sacred Office: VVhat is this but ἱεροσυλία, as the Council of *Chalcedon* calls it? an abſolute Sacriledg, thus to remove

the bound-ſtones of the Church. VVhat are theſe but a new off-ſpring of the old Heretick *Aerius*, whom therefore *Epiphanius* accounted one of the moſt giddy-brain'd Hereticks that ever was, for maintaining that *Biſhops* and *Presbyters* were all one. VVhat may be ſaid in favour of their *Tranſmarine* Brethren, I know not; but for theſe that live amongſt Biſhops, and yet ſeek their Ordination from Presbyters, what rare-gifted men ſoever they may be eſteemed among themſelves, and what Dignity ſoever they may attain to in the *Kirk*, I am ſure they can have no place allowed them in Chriſts Church; and were they to be tried at the Bar of Antiquity, they could never be found to be of the Tribe of *Levi*, unleſs it were in the Company of *Korah*; and let all ſuch Church-Robbers take heed they periſh not in his gainſaying; and leſt thus reſiſting the Ordinance of God, they receive to themſelves Damnation. Rom. 13.2. VVe ſee how directly contrary theſe men walk to the Example of our Apoſtle here; who though call'd immediately by Chriſt, yet was content to take his Commiſſion from the hands of ſuch whom Chriſt had delegated for that purpoſe; and he is ſo far from diſowning it (like thoſe *Renegado's* in our Church who renounce

nounce their Ordination) that he thinks it a χάρις, a χάρισμα, *a ſpecial grace and favour.* And indeed, if the weight and dignity of this Sacred Function were duly conſidered, as it would not be ſo raſhly undertaken, as it is by ſome; ſo it would not be ſo lightly made of, as it is by others. *But from the beginning it was not ſo. Profuit olim dicere civis Romanus ſum*, ſaith *Cicero: It was once an advantage to ſay, I am a Citizen of* Rome: And St. *Paul* you know found it ſo. So, *profuit olim*, 'twas heretofore a credit to ſay, *I am a Clergy-man*; though now they are lookt upon by ſome ὡς περικαθάρματα, καὶ περιψήματα τοῦ κόσμου but *as the off-ſcouring of the world.* There was a time when the people, like the *Galatians*, were ready to pluck out their own eyes to do their Miniſter any good. There was a time when a Clergy-man could not be brought before any Secular Judg. There was a time when the Clergy was free from all publick Taxes and Payments. There was a time when if a Lay-man on Horſe-back met a Clergy-man on foot upon the road, he was to a-light from his Horſe, and ſalute him with a προσκυνῶ σε κύριε: I forbear to tranſlate the words, leſt they might ſound too

Acts 22. 29.

1 Cor. 4. 13.

Gal. 4. 15.

2 Concil. *Matiſcon.* Can. 9, 10, 15

Iſidor. Pelu. lib. 1. Epiſt.

too harſh to ſome, or paraſitical to others. VVe cannot hope, nor indeed ſcarce with modeſty deſire to have all theſe Priviledges reſtor'd to us; yet we may expect men ſhould look upon us as the Miniſters of Chriſt; that they
1 Theſ. 5. 13 *ſhould eſteem us, and that highly, for our works ſake.* Let men remember, that Chriſt, who ſaid, *As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you*;
Luke 10. 16 hath alſo ſaid, *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* The Apoſtle therefore commands *Titus* expreſly, *Tit.* 2. 15, μηδείς σε περιφρονείτω, *Let no man deſpiſe thee.* As we muſt not give men any juſt occaſion to undervalue us, ſo we muſt ſtand up to maintain the dignity of our Office. Though we muſt not (as *Leo* ſaid) *ſuperbire de merito*, be blown up with a high conceit of our own merit or ſufficiency, yet we may with our Apoſtle here, *gandere de dono*, glory in our Callings. VVhen he lookt upon himſelf as of himſelf, he accounts himſelf *leſs than the leaſt*; but when he looks upon himſelf as Chriſts Meſſenger, he doth
Rom. 15. 17. ἔχειν καύχησιν glory in the Employment, and thanks God moſt heartily that he thought him worthy to put him into the Miniſtry, though it were but ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, amongſt the *Gentiles*.

And

And this minds me of the third particular obſerved in the words; The perſons amongſt whom St. *Paul* was to exerciſe his Commiſſion, 'twas ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν *amongſt the Gentiles. To me who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles.* God indeed had made St. *Paul* a debtor to the *Jew* as well as to the *Gentile*; and we read in *Acts* 26. 20, that he tells King *Agrippa*, That he had opened his Commiſſion firſt in the Synagogue of the *Jews* at *Damaſcus*, *Jeruſalem*, *Salamis*, and *Antioch* in *Piſidia*, *Acts* 13. 5, 14. And ſo long taught he among them, till he ſaw that all his labour was but loſt; till inſtead of believing, they fell to blaſpheming, *and judged themſelves unworthy of everlaſting life*; and at length not intreated him as they did our Saviour, but compell'd him to leave their Coaſts: Then indeed *he ſhook off the duſt of his feet againſt them, and was forbidden by the Holy Ghoſt to preach the word any more amongſt them.* After this, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* made, as it were, but two great Dioceſſes of the whole Church. The Goſpel of the *Circumciſion* was delivered to St. *Peter*; and the Goſpel of the *Uncircumciſion* to St. *Paul*.

Acts 18.

Acts 16. 6.

And

And certainly, though St. *Paul* muſt preach firſt to the *Jews*, that they might be left inexcuſable, and not plead, That perhaps they might have been converted, if they had had a *Paul* for their Teacher; yet that God had chiefly deſigned him for the *Gentiles*, is manifeſt by that which God firſt declar'd to him in a viſion, *Acts* 22. 21. *Depart, for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles*: And therefore we find St. *Paul* calls himſelf every where, ἔθνων Ἀπόστολον, *Rom.* 15. 15. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. 8, 11. And in *Rom.* 11. 13. ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν Ἀπόστολος, τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω, *I am* (ſaith he) *the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, and I magnifie mine Office*; He glories in the Employment: God thinks fit to ſend him to the Gentiles, and he was ready to go; he bows his back willingly to receive that burden which God thought fit to lay on him.

Gods Miniſters muſt not be their own chuſers; God will have them at his beck, to come when he calls them, and to go when and vvhither he bids them. *Jonah* muſt leave his ovvn Countrey to go to *Nineveh*, from the Children of *Iſrael* to the Children of *Aſſur*. And St. *Paul* muſt leave *Tarſus* in *Cilicia*, no mean City, vvhere he

vvas

vvas born, and the lot of Gods ovvn Inheritance, the Church of the *Jews*, to go to the *Gentiles*, which neither knew him nor God. A large Dioceſs he had, almoſt as great as *Noah*'s, the whole Earth; yet as large as it was, and as dark too, he carried a light with him that he knew would overſpread it all, a light which God made on purpoſe *to lighten the Gentiles, to give light to them which ſate in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace.* His journey was large that he had to go, but God ſhooes him on purpoſe for it. He had *his feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel.* And now being thus provided with theſe ſhooes on his feet, and this light in his hand, ſee how he beſtirs himſelf; what frequent viſitations he makes to all his Churches, and whither he cannot go, he ſends. It would even tire your very thoughts to follow him in his Journeys and Voyages; from his ſwiftneſs and alacrity in Gods ſervice, one might think he had borrowed Wings from ſome Cherub whiles he was in the third Heaven; from the many places where he ſetled the Goſpel in ſo ſhort a time, one would judg him to have had *corpus quoddam* ἀϋλωτὸν, as *Origen* ſpeaks, that

Luke 1. 79.

Eph. 6. 15.

2 Cor. 12. 2.

that he had been almoſt every where at once; and doubt, as himſelf did once, *whether he were in the body, or out of the body.*

But though his Labours were ſo great, his Sufferings were yet far greater: If he be at Sea, an *Euroclydon* follows him; If on ſhore, he is *perſecuted, afflicted, tormented; ſcoffs, and taunts, and bonds, and impriſonments, the dungeon, and the ſtocks, and the whipping-poſt did abide him in every City.* As of his Journeys may be made a great Map; ſo of his Sufferings might be made a large Martyrology; an Epitome whereof he hath himſelf given us, 2 *Cor.* 11. All theſe Difficulties did this great Apoſtle chearfully paſs through, that he might faithfully diſcharge that Commiſſion which he had received from Chriſt. He carried a Treaſure which he knew could not be loſt; a Light, which the Prince of the Air, could he have join'd all the Winds in one, could not blow out. This made him go on with ſuch a courage. This made him *able to do all things through God that ſtrengthened him*; and to ſuffer all things too, *being ready not only to be bound, but to dye alſo for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*

Acts 27. 14

Acts 20. 23.

Phil. 4. 13

Acts 21. 13.

Let us then take this great Servant of Chriſt

Chriſt for our example. Whatever ſad proſpect of miſery, perſecution, and affliction, we may ſee before us (as methinks the Clouds gather over our heads as if ſuch a ſtorm were coming); yet let us go on with courage, and diligence, and chearfulneſs, in the works of our great Calling; and be careful not only to feed, but to defend our Flocks. Let us not be afraid of Lions in the way that God ſends us; but if any ſuch come to take a Lamb out of our Fold, let us (with *David*) take them by the beards, and do what we can to deliver them out of their mouths. If any wild Bores out of the Wood break in upon us, to lay waſte the Field of the Church; let us do what we can to break their tusks, and to put grinds in their ſnouts that they may not root up Gods Heritage. If any ſubtil Foxes come to ſpoil the Grapes of thoſe Vineyards God hath given us the charge of, let us do what we can, with *Sampſon*, to tye them together with fire-brands at their tayls, and drive them into their own Corn, that they may burn down the Fields of Tares which they themſelves have ſown. If any ſuch Enemies of Chriſts Church come to hinder us in our Labours, let us not be diſcouraged, but with-

1 Sam. 17. 35

Pſal. 80. 13.

Cant. 2. 15.

Judg. 15. 4.

ſtand them to the faces, and not give them place, no, not for an hour. *Let us* ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι *earneſtly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints*; and not part with one grain of it, no, not to ſave our lives. Let us remember that our great Maſter, *the great Captain of our ſalvation*, ſtands by us to ſecond us, and that through him we are ſure to be more than Conquerors. Let us not run to ſhade then, if the Sun ſhould ſcorch us whilſt we are labouring in Gods Harveſt, nor murmur if with *Jacob*, whilſt we are watching our Flocks, the drought ſhould conſume us by day, and the froſt by night. Like good Soldiers of Chriſt, let us learn to endure hardneſs. Let us not hide our Lights then, for fear, under a buſhel, nor bury our Talents, for lazineſs, in a napkin; but be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, *docendo*, *jubendo*, *monendo*, *minando*, as Mr. *Calvin* ſpeaks; unto which let me add *vivendo* too; By Doctrine, by Reproof, by Inſtruction, by Correction, and by a ſtrict, godly, and religious Life and Converſation; and then let us know, that *our labour will not be in vain in the Lord*. Let us but manage the Stock which God hath put into our hands, to his Churches beſt advantage, and

Jude 3.

Gen. 31. 40

Calv. Inſt. lib. 4. c. 12.

and we may be aſſur'd we ſhall be large ſharers in theſe Riches, even the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt. Which brings me to the laſt Particular obſerved in the words, The Burden or Subſtance of St. *Paul*'s Commiſſion, *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.*

And was this St. *Paul*'s Commiſſion? VVas this the Treaſure he was put in truſt with? No leſs than the *unſearchable riches of Chriſt?* VVe cannot wonder then, that he doth δοξάζειν magnifie his Office: VVho would not gladly endure thongs, ſtripes, ſtones, any thing, to be Gods Almoner? To be the Treaſurer of ſuch *unſearchable riches*, unſearchable, inexhauſtible Riches. The Apoſtle wants words to expreſs them. In the firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle, verſe the 18, he calls them πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης, the *riches of Gods glory.* In the ſecond Chapter at the fourth verſe, πλοῦτον τῆς χρηστότητος, *the riches of his mercy:* In the ſame Chapter at the 7th verſe, πλοῦτον τῆς χάριτος, *the riches of his grace:* Glorious, Merciful, Gracious Riches; and yet all theſe too little: and therefore he calls them here in the Text, as well he might, πλοῦτον ἀνεξιχνίαστον, *unſearchable, uninveſtigable riches*; Riches brought us through ſuch a Labyrinth of Mercies and Miracles, that no Clue of Reaſon

could reach to diſcover; tyed up in ſuch a *Gordian, True-lovers-knot* of God's own knitting, that none but the Spirit of God could untye: Riches digged out of the ineſpuiſſable Myne of God's unſpeakable Love to Mankind: An Ocean of Wealth, riſing only from the ſecret Springs of God's Mercy in Chriſt.

And therefore the Apoſtle had juſt reaſon to call them, as he does, *the Riches of Chriſt*, for they are his indeed, and only his; he offered up his whole Body to be calcined in the Furnace of his Sufferings, that he might caſt it all into this Coyn; not a piece in the whole endleſs, numberleſs Sum, but bears the tincture of his Blood. God would receive no Payment for man's Ranſome, but in this Metal: The Blood of the moſt glorious Saints and Martyrs (though very precious in God's ſight), was of too baſe an allay to mingle with it.

'Twas the Blood of Chriſt only, the Blood of one that was God, could ſatisfie this Debt; and Chriſt himſelf was willing to have it ſo. O the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt! well may the Angels ſtand amazed to behold theſe πολυτίμητα τῆς θεότ, this glorious heap and varie-

variegated intricacy of Gods Love to mankind! That man ſhould ſin and not ſuffer, Chriſt ſhould ſuffer and not ſin, and that man ſhould thus be made rich with the price of his ſufferings, O βάθος! O the depth of the Riches not only of the Wiſdom and Knowledg, but of the Goodneſs and Mercy of God! *How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* Rom. 11. 33.

But are we then whom God hath choſen for the Miniſtry of his Goſpel, the Stewards of theſe unſearchable Riches? *O quam grande munus! O quam grave onus!* Sure then our Dignity is not ſo great, but our Charge is yet greater!

Quid ego infœlix, ſaith St. *Bernard*, *quo mevertam ſi tantum Theſaurum, tam pretioſum depoſitum contigerit negligentius cuſtodire?* O what ſhall we do, what will become of us, if we do not diligently and faithfully diſpoſe of this rich Treaſure committed unto us! *Non eſt mihi dicere cum Caino, Nunquid Cuſtos fratris mei ſum ego?* We cannot ſay with *Cain*, *Am I my brothers keeper?* For we are ſet to watch over the Souls of our Brethren; and we are the Keepers of theſe Riches for their uſe. We muſt not only give an account for our *Bern. Ser. de triplici adventu.* Heb. 3. 17.

our own Talents, but of the Talents which we have received for them too. We are not only οἰκονόμοι. *diſpenſatores*; but we are ἐγγραφεῖς. *exactores*: We muſt not only deal out this Treaſure, but we muſt take an account of them to whom we have delivered it, and give it in to our great Lord and Maſter, who will ſurely one day ſay unto every one of us, Give an account of thy Stewardſhip. *O quid hoc officio difficilius, quid laborioſius, quid periculoſius?* ſaith Saint *Auſtin*. What task can there be more difficult? What condition more dangerous? *Si ſtillantem in cruce Domini ſanguinem collegiſſem* (ſaith Saint *Bernard*) *eſſetque repoſitus penes me in vaſe vitreo, quod & portari ſæpius oporteret, quid animi, habiturus eſſem in tanto Diſcrimine? & certe hunc ſervandum accepi.* If I had taken the blood of Chriſt trickling from the Croſs into a Veſſel of Earth or Glaſs, which I muſt have carried with me alſo whitherſoever I had gone, O what heart could I have had under ſo great a charge? Yet this we have received in truſt, even all the Merits of Chriſts Blood, and this we carry about us in Veſſels weaker and more brittle than either earth or glaſs; O with what care then, with what uprightneſs, with what circum-

Luk. 16. 2.

Aug. 148. *Epiſt. ad Valerium Epiſc. pan.*

Bern. ubi ſupra.

circumſpection ought we to walk in the diſcharge of this weighty Calling! πρὸς ταῦτα, ſaith the Apoſtle, *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* 2 Cor. 2. 16. *Si reddenda eſt ratio de his quæ quiſque geſſit in corpore ſuo, heu! quid fiet de his, quæ quiſque geſſit in corpore Chriſti?* ſaith St. *Bernard.* *Bern. in Sermone ad clerum.* If it be ſo hard for every one to give an account for what he hath done in his own body, how hard wilt then be for us who muſt give an account for what we have done in the Body of Chriſt, which is the Church? If *Jacob* found it ſo great a preſſure to anſwer his Unckle *Laban* for every Sheep that was ſtolen, and every Lamb that vvas torn by the vvild beaſt; O hovv ſhall vve anſvver our great Maſter, if any of thoſe Sheep periſh through our negligence, over vvhich the Holy Ghoſt hath made us Overſeers? O the ſad vvo denounc't againſt ſuch evil Stevvards! (*horreſco referens*) διχοτομήσει αὐτὸν, *The Lord will cut them aſunder, and give them their portion with hypocrites, where ſhall be weeping & gnaſhing of teeth.* But though the vveight of this duty lye ſo heavy upon us, yet are not you free from the burden; though vve muſt give an account for our ſelves and you; yet it will be expected you ſhould give an account for Gen. 31. 39. Luk. 12. 46.

for your ſelves too. As there is a vvo againſt us, if vve preach not the Goſpel; ſo there
1 Pet. 4. 17. is a vvo againſt you, if you obey not the Goſpel. Our miſery indeed muſt be unſpeakable, if vve neglect the Gift that is in us; but then
Heb. 2. 3. hovv can you eſcape if you neglect ſo great Salvation? Our Judgment vvill be intolerable if vve make you not a tender of theſe unſearchable Riches; but if you deſpiſe the Riches of Gods Grace, you will *treaſure up*
Rom. 2. 5. *unto your ſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, who will render unto every man according to his deeds.* O then, as you love your Souls, labour to make theſe Riches your ovvn; bring but Faith and a contrite Heart, and you may be as rich as you will. Be then like the
Mat. 13. 45. vviſe Merchant, ſell all you have, all your luſts, all your ſinful pleaſures and delights, to buy this Pearl, account all things but σκύβαλα, droſs and dung in compariſon of this Treaſure. The merchandiſe of it is better than
Prov. 3. 14. *the merchandiſe of ſilver* (ſaith the VViſeman) *and the gain thereof than fine gold.* And all the things you can deſire are not to be compared unto it. O ſeek it then vvhiles it may be found, ay, and that you may be ſure to find

find it when you ſeek it, ſeek it too where it may be found. Where Chriſt is, there this Treaſure is; and Chriſt is no where but in the Church: The Church is his γαζοφυλάκιον, his Store-houſe, his Treaſury; and his Miniſters are the Keepers of this Store, the Treaſurers of this Exchequer. You will meet with ſome Huckſters out of the Church, that would fain make Merchandiſe of your Souls, which pretend they have the diſpoſing of theſe *unſearchable Riches*, but believe them not, go not after them, they are but Merchant-Adventurers in Religion, and will bring you nothing but Apes and Peacocks, inſtead of this *Gold of Ophir*; what they deal out to you, is of their own coining, or elſe is clipt or adulterated; the *Decus & Tutamen* of it is gone, it bears not on it the Image and Superſcription of Chriſt. 1 King. 10. 22.

Chriſt conveys theſe Riches to us by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and he will have none preach but ſuch as are ſent: He gives us this Treaſure in the *ſincere milk of the Word*, and this he will have us draw from the breaſts of his Church. Now there are many that pretend to this Title, that ſay, *Here is Chriſt*, and *there is Chriſt*; many that will Rom. 10.15 Mat. 24.23.

undertake to nurſe you, and to give you of this Milk; but be not deluded, I beſeech you; be *not drawn away by the ſlights and cunning craftineſs of ſuch as lye in wait to deceive you.*

Eph. 4. 14.

The Church of *Rome* offers to be your Nurſe, I know; and ſhe was indeed a good Nurſe whiles ſhe kept her firſt Love; but now her Ulcerous and Impoſtumated Dugs iſſue out only the Ichorous Juice of Idolatry and Superſtition. There is a young Harlotry Strumpet too lately delivered amongſt us of an *Amphisbæna*, a Viper with two Heads, hiſſing out *Presbytery* at one end, and *Independency* with all kind of *Fanaticiſm*, at the other; and this Hag holds out her wanton and adulterated Paps, and offers to give you ſuck too: But take heed, as you love your lives, take heed; flye from the face of this Viper, as from the face of the Wiſe-man's Serpent; for if ye come but near, it will bite ye; *the teeth thereof are as the teeth of a Lion, ſlaying the ſouls of men. Her Milk* (we have found it by too ſad experience) *is the very poyſon of Aſps.*

Lucan. & gravis in geminum ſurgens caput *Amphisbæna.*

Ecclus. 21. 2

Both theſe are equally dangerous; they will either poyſon or ſtarve your Souls. Shall I wiſh you a Nurſe then, whoſe Breaſts you may ſafely draw? A wholſom, chaſt, and tender

tender Nurſe? VVhy, 'tis your Mother the Church of *England*; *quæ vos genuit, quæ vos aluit*, that gave you your ſecond Birth, that hath nouriſhed and brought you up carefully ever ſince. Her Breaſts are as beauteous, and as full of Milk as ever; of this γάλα ἄδολον, this ſincere, uncorrupted Milk, that will make you not only wiſe, but rich unto Salvation; in the ſtrength whereof you ſhall become perfect men in Chriſt Jeſus, and be fat and well-liking in the ſight of God, and at length arrive to the height of the meaſure of the ſtature in Chriſt. Thus ſhall we all give up our Accounts with joy, and be made partakers together of theſe unſearchable Riches. Thus both the Shepherds and the Sheep ſhall be ſet on Chriſt's right hand, and be tranſlated from death to life, from the Riches of his Grace, to the Riches of his Glory; from the boſom of the Church-Militant, to the boſom of the Church-Triumphant in Heaven, where we ſhall ſing perpetual *Hallelujahs*, praiſing God, and ſaying, *Honour, and Praiſe, and Power, be unto him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.* Amen.

1 Pet. 2. 2.

Eph. 4. 13.

FINIS.